

NOTICE OF A THIRD BRASS OF ROMULUS, SON OF MAXENTIUS,
AND OTHER COINS, FOUND AT PÆSTUM. BY JOHN ALEXANDER
SMITH, M.D., SEC. S.A. SCOT.

In the beginning of April 1868 I was fortunate enough to be able to ascend Vesuvius, and see by night the awful grandeur of an eruption ; and on the 8th of the month I had the pleasure of paying a visit to the magnificent ruins of the ancient city of Pæstum. These ruins are believed to be second only in importance to those of Athens, and the most ancient examples of classical architecture in Italy. A visit to Pæstum can now be made without any difficulty, going by railway from Naples to Salerno, sending from thence a carriage to wait for you at the railway station of Battipaglia, which you reach by the first train next morning, then driving to Pæstum, and back to Battipaglia in the evening, in time to catch the last train for Naples. The trip is now also almost free from the danger of brigands, as the Italian Government requires each party of visitors to take a guard of at least two mounted troopers (armed with sword, carbine, and revolver). This guard we got at the village of Battipaglia, they crossed with us the river Sele, and were there succeeded by other two from a barrack close by, who went with us to Pæstum, followed us closely through the ruins, and left us again at the ferry of the Sele, to be replaced by the first soldiers who returned with us to Battipaglia.

When walking among the ruins a peasant woman offered me the head of a small terra cotta female figure, or Venus, which she had picked up there (exhibited) ; and on passing several peasants busily engaged digging the ground within the walls, not far from the temples, one of them came to me with a few brass coins he had found. Most of these are of comparatively little interest, except as being found in that locality. They consist of—

1. Two small coins of Pæstum,—one having half a boar on the *Obverse*, and apparently one or two globules or dots, to denote its value ; one, two,

three, four, five, and an S or six dots ; signifying the uncia (or twelfth part), sextans, quadrans, triens, quincunx, and semis or half, respectively, —the various parts or divisions of the As. The other coin is illegible ; but our Curator, Mr Sim, thinks, from its general appearance, it is probably also a coin of Pæstum.

2. A coin of Pæstum, the size of a third brass. It is partly broken, and has on the *Obverse* the head of a young man (Bacchus) crowned with ivy and looking to the right ; and behind the head, four dots or globules. *Reverse*, a cornucopia with a bunch of grapes hanging from it on each side, and behind the cornucopia, four dots. It is therefore a triens, and of the date of about 200 years before Christ.

3. The next is an early Roman coin. *Obverse*, a man's head looking to right ; *Reverse*, prow of a galley, and below, two dots. A sextans, or sixth part of the As, and is of the size of the third brass.

4. A third brass of the Emperor Valens, A.D. 328. *Obverse*, Victory marching to left, with crown and palm. *Reverse*, SECURITAS REIPUBLICÆ. A common coin.

5. The last coin is rather a rare one, and in fine condition. A Third Brass of Marcus Aurelius Romulus, the son of Maxentius, born about A.D. 306, and died A.D. 309. *Obverse*, bare head of Romulus looking to right, with the legend, DIVO ROMVLO NVBIS CONS. *Reverse*, a circular temple or tomb, with a dome, and on it above, an eagle with expanded wings, AETERNÆ MEMORIAE. In the *Exergue*, the letters M O S T T (*Moneta Signata Treveris*).

There is no specimen of this coin in the collection of the Society. There are, however, two of a Second Brass of Romulus, also of a rare type, but not in fine condition. It displays on the *Obverse*, bare head of Romulus looking to right, IMP MAXENTIVS DIVO ROMULO NV FILIO. *Reverse*, a circular temple with dome, and eagle above, with expanded wings, AETERNA MEMORIA. In *Exergue*, M O S T T, these letters are the same as on the third brass ; the coins have, therefore, been struck at the same place.

The reading of the letters NV, and of NVBIS CONS, in the legend of these coins, has always been considered a complete numismatic puzzle, and it is only very recently that the true explanation has been suggested by M. de Longpérier, as being for NV—N(OBILISSIMO) V(IRO) ; and Mr

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George Sim has called my attention to the following notice published by Mr John Evans in the "Numismatic Chronicle" for 1865:—

"The interpretation of the legend NVBIS CONS, which occurs after the name of Romulus, the son of Maxentius, on many of his coins, has been the subject of much dispute among numismatists. M. de Longpérier, however, in the 'Revue Numismatique,' N.S. vol. i. p. 36, pointed out what appears beyond doubt the proper interpretation of the legend, as DIVO ROMULO, N(OBILISSIMO) V(IRO) BIS CONS(VLI). An inscription discovered on the site of the ancient Troesmis, in Lower Mæsia, is of interest, both as affording corroboration, if such were needed, of M. de Longpérier's suggestion, and as giving an instance of the use of a nearly similar title at an earlier date. It is to the honour of Tib. Claud. Pompeianus, who was consul for the second time in 173, and is thus given by M. Leon Renier in the 'Revue Archæologique' for December 1865 (p. 405):—

TIBCLPOM
PEIANOCV
BISCONSVLI
GVALFIRMVS
CLEGIITAL

TIBERIO CLAUDIO POMPEIANO CLARISSIMO VIRO BIS CONSULI GAIUS VALERIUS FIRMUS, CENTURIO LEGIONIS PRIMÆ ITALICÆ."

I have much pleasure in presenting the coins to the Numismatic Collection of the Society.